



United States Air Force Auxiliary
Civil Air Patrol - Louisiana Wing
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Dear Encampment Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Your Cadet is preparing to embark on a unique experience-the Louisiana Wing (LAWG) Basic Encampment. Your Cadet, along with every other Cadet in attendance, will be supervised, trained, and monitored by veteran members of Civil Air Patrol. Our host facility, Barksdale Air Force Base (BAFB) will provide lodging, meals, and some activities. Cadets will rise early in the morning and prepare for a uniform inspection and a room inspection. They will march out for morning formation at 0600 (6:00 am civilian time, but your Cadet knows how to tell military time) along with every other member of the Encampment. They will eat their meals in the same facility as active duty personnel in the United States Air Force (USAF). Their days will be filled with training in drill and ceremony, military customs and courtesies, and the missions of both CAP and the USAF. By the time lights-out comes at 2200 (10:00 pm), they will welcome the chance to sleep. The next day will begin at 0530 (5:30 am) and will bring another work-filled adventure.

For some of you as parents, this will be the first time your Cadet has been away from home for more than one night. In past over-night adventures away from you, your Cadet was probably under the supervision of a person or persons you know well and trust implicitly. Your concerns for your Cadet's safety and well being were few, if any. What follows are some of the questions we have answered over the years from parents of Cadets. Please read the questions and answers carefully, since they may relieve any apprehensions you may have about allowing your Cadet to participate in Encampment.

How will I know that my Cadet has arrived and is okay?

One of the first orders of business at Encampment for your Basic Cadet (first time Encampment Cadet) is to send you a post card. We can not guarantee that it will say anything more than, "I'm here!" but you will at least know that your Cadet arrived safely. Your Cadet will also have some personal time each evening, generally between 2100 (9:00 pm) and 2200 (10:00 pm). During that time, they might choose to phone you. The Encampment can not absorb the cost of phone calls home. Please provide your Cadet with a calling card or permission to call you collect. (Do not send a cell phone. It will be confiscated and returned at the end of the Encampment.) It has been our experience that even the most home-sick Cadet "gets over it" by the end of the second day of training and seems to forget the phone calls.

You have the emergency phone numbers for my Cadet. What if an emergency occurs at home and I need to contact my Cadet? Is there a number where I can reach the Encampment?

Emergency telephone numbers will be provided on the instruction sheet for reporting. These numbers are for genuine emergencies only. The Encampment staff is very busy for the entire activity, so please restrict your calls.

It is really hot in the summer, and I am concerned about the effects of the heat on my Cadet. What are the plans for helping him/her cope with the heat?

The safety of all participants is paramount in the conduct of all activities at Encampment. The staff is trained to look for the effects of heat, stress, and fatigue. The Encampment has a qualified medical officer and access to a medical treatment facility if needed. It is extremely important that you provide the Encampment with the most recent medical information on your Cadet. One of the most important things the Encampment Staff needs to know is any history of heat-related medical treatment your Cadet may have received. Many people are not aware that each heat-related incident decreases an individual's tolerance to heat. Heat is usually a governing factor in the duration and the type of training conducted. As the heat index increases, outdoor activity decreases, in accordance with USAF standards.

What can I do to prepare my Cadet to cope with the heat during Encampment?

The greatest danger from the heat comes in the form of dehydration. During extreme conditions, USAF standards call for personnel to consume as much as one quart of water per hour, with frequent breaks depending on the activity. To prevent any heat related incidents a hydration plan is in place for Encampment. Water consumption of each participant will be closely monitored to assure they are drinking enough. If your Cadet is accustomed to drinking soda rather than water, do your best to encourage water instead. Maintaining proper hydration is an on-going process. Your Cadet can not wait until Encampment to begin hydrating. For a full week before arrival, your Cadet should drink at least 18 ounces of water at each meal, as he/she will be required to do at Encampment. The best way to prevent a need for medical treatment for dehydration is to encourage your Cadet to begin drinking water regularly. The only negative side effect of this preventive measure might be more frequent visits to the bathroom.

One of the most important items on your Cadet's list of supplies is a canteen! This is a must-have item! It must be a military style canteen worn on a web belt around the waist. Check the sporting goods/camping equipment sections of department stores. Sporting goods retailers also carry these types of items. Cost varies among retailers but should not exceed \$10.00-\$12.00. If there is a "military surplus" style store in your area, check there, too.

The schedule sounds busy. Is there any danger of my Cadet not getting enough rest and becoming exhausted? What is the best thing to do to prepare my Cadet for the rigors of Encampment?

This will probably be the most intense week your Cadet has ever experienced, physically, mentally, and emotionally. You can help your Cadet prepare for Encampment by doing several things.

If your Cadet is used to sleeping in (anytime beyond 0700/7:00 am), begin getting him/her up earlier. Wake-up for Encampment is no later than (NLT) 0530 (5:30 am). Training days are long, with no opportunity to nap, much less sleep in. Fatigue can be reduced with adequate rest. Lights-out means Cadets are in bed and ready for sleep. Much of our activity at Encampment revolves around training provided by USAF personnel at BAFB, so our schedule must align with their duty schedule. Cadets who sleep in until the morning they leave for Encampment generally struggle with fatigue all week long. It is recommended that the Cadet begins rising NLT 0600 (6:00 am) and retiring NLT 2100 (9:00 pm) for the week prior to arriving.

What about food? What kind of meals will be served? Will he/she get enough to eat?

Encampment participants will dine in the same USAF dining facility (“mess hall”) as our BAFB host personnel. Menus will be varied, but will always include well-balanced meals. Milk and other dairy products are restricted to prevent digestive problems related to the strenuous level of activity and the heat. . If your Cadet is used to eating more than two meals a week from “fast food” outlets, begin monitoring and encouraging them to eat more vegetables and fruit. Cadets are encouraged to eat as much as they need to maintain their energy level and their food intake is monitored. Remind your Cadet to eat all he or she takes. Cadets experiencing military dining and food for the first time are sometimes reluctant to eat food prepared differently from home. Once the reality of no-food-until-the-next-meal sets in, they sometimes take more than they can eat. The military adage is, “Take all you want, eat all you take.”

Now that I know that my Cadet will get enough to eat and drink and will get enough rest, what happens if my Cadet needs medical attention?

The Encampment is a carefully planned and executed activity, and the safety of all participants is paramount. However, illness or injuries can occur. The medical information requested in the application packet is vital should your Cadet need medical attention during encampment. Phone numbers are also vital information, including the family physician’s. Please be assured that no risks will be taken when it comes to the health, safety, and well being of participants. Should your Cadet require medical attention beyond the occasional blister, headache, or stomachache, an Encampment Senior Staff Member will notify you immediately. The judgement to seek further medical attention is made by the Encampment Medical Officer. The person contacting you may be the Medical Officer, but since he/she will be accompanying your Cadet to the medical facility, it will probably be another Senior Staff Member. You will be given the reason for seeking medical attention, the current condition of your Cadet, and a telephone number where you can reach the medical facility treating your Cadet.

What about medication? If my Cadet takes medication, what should I send?

It is imperative that any medication, prescribed or over-the-counter, be documented on the application packet's medical section. Use additional pages if necessary. Medication must be sent in **original** containers that identify the content and dosage. You must also include the reason for the medication. This is especially important for prescription medications but is also important for over-the-counter products, too. You **must disclose** all medications your Cadet is taking and the reasons for the medications. **Cadets arriving with undocumented medications, even over-the-counter medication, will not be registered and will be required to make arrangements to return home!**

What about my Cadet's right to privacy about medical treatment? How will that be protected?

The medical information requested is intended solely for the well being and safety of your Cadet. The medical information will be given to the Encampment Medical Officer and will be kept in a secure place. No one else at the Encampment will have access to this information. The information is solely for the benefit of your Cadet if he/she is taking medication or of it becomes necessary to seek medical treatment away from the Encampment. This information will be shared on a "need-to-know" basis **only**.

What else can I do to help ensure that my Cadet has a successful Encampment?

You and your Cadet should review the Encampment Guide together. Make sure both of you understand what is required to fully participate. The Guide is pretty straightforward. It tells what to bring as well as what not to bring. Uniform requirements and clothing needed are clear-cut. The Guide is a compilation of many years of learning by Staff Members and it will answer most, if not all, of your questions.

The Guide has suggestions for packing and a departure and a return checklist. Please impress on your Cadet the importance of using this checklist when packing to go to Encampment and when packing after Encampment to return home.

Speaking of the uniforms and the checklist in the Encampment Guide, I looked all over for brown or drab t-shirts and I can't find them anywhere. What can I do to make sure my Cadet has the right t-shirts?

This is a question raised for almost every Encampment. Military Clothing Sales stores are the best place to buy the brown or drab t-shirts. Sporting goods or outdoor outfitters may have them, too. If neither of these is an option for you, simply dye white t-shirts to come close to the brown color on the camouflage uniform (BDU). Many parents have done this in the past and have been quite successful.

This is only one of the many questions parents have about uniform requirements before every Encampment. If you have questions about any aspect of Encampment, you should first ask your Cadet's Squadron Commander. She/he is your first line source of information. If the Commander does not know the answer, you should be referred to someone who does.

I would like to visit the Encampment. Are there provisions for visitors during the Encampment?

As we discussed earlier, the Encampment schedule is filled from Reveille (wake-up) to Taps (lights-out). The schedule does not allow time for visits from families and friends of Encampment participants, including the Encampment Staff. On the closing day of the Encampment parents and friends are encouraged to attend the “Pass and Review” ceremony (location and time TBA on the LAWG web site www.lawg.cap.gov) and the Graduation Ceremony at the Warrior Center.

Base security is currently in a heightened state. Access to BAFB is restricted to those who have official business on the base. The security checkpoints at each entrance will have documentation that your Cadet is in attendance at the Encampment and should allow you access to the Warrior Center. Your party may be requested to provide identification before access to the base is granted, so be prepared with your driver’s license or some other form of identification.

What happens if my Cadet arrives at Encampment but decides that he/she would rather not stay?

First make sure that your Cadet is enthusiastic about participating in and completing Encampment. You should talk to his/her Squadron Commander about Encampment. Have him/her talk to other Cadets who have been to Encampment. These are all sources about the “real world” of Encampment. If your Cadet is in the least bit unsure about attending, do not send him/her. If at any point during the Encampment your Cadet says he/she wants to leave, he/she will be allowed to call you to make arrangements to return home. At that point, the Cadet will be required to prepare his/her gear for the return trip. He/she will be removed from the flight and assigned a secure area to wait for transportation from the Encampment.

Encampment is a unique experience. Your Cadet will forge friendships that might last a lifetime. Your Cadet will gain experiences in team building, problem solving, and the importance of working as a team that will serve him/her well in any career choice he/she might make. Your Cadet will come home “different” from the person you sent. Our Encampment Staff is experienced, motivated, dedicated, and well trained to guide your Cadet through a meaningful Encampment. You can do your part to help us by following the suggestions we have given you to prepare your Cadet. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. My telephone number and e-mail address are in the letterhead.

Sincerely,

Major Clyde X. Robichaux, CAP
LAWG Director of Cadet Programs